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Attachment Injury-Related Responses from the Offending Partner and Forgiveness in Romantic Relationships

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ATTACHMENT INJURY-RELATED RESPONSES FROM THE OFFENDING PARTNER AND FORGIVENESS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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Attachment injuries in romantic relationships carry the potential for several negative short- and long-term outcomes for the injured partner, the offending partner, and the relationship. Forgiveness can serve to repair the damage caused by such an injury. The concept of forgiveness, however, has predominantly only been studied as the responsibility of and of primary interest to the injured partner. There is a growing need for closer examination of what the offending partner can do to promote forgiveness. The Attachment Injury Resolution Model (AIRM) proposes eight distinct steps including actions for each partner that can lead a couple towards recovery. This study examined the actionable AIRM steps for the offending partner to draw conclusions about their association with forgiveness. These steps include empathizing, responsibility-taking, and comforting. We analyzed data collected from 18- and 19-year-old undergraduate students in committed romantic relationships who reported having experienced an attachment injury in their relationships. Regression models were conducted to investigate each of the three offender behaviors in the AIRM and each of the domains of forgiveness (avoidance, revenge-seeking, and benevolence). We found that couples in this age group displayed high rates of offender behaviors as well as high levels of forgiveness pointing to high capacity for self-repair. Findings also offered clarity on the offending partners' role

towards relationship repair. Specifically, a significant association emerged between repair-oriented behaviors from the offender and the injured partner's experience of benevolence towards them. These results have significant future clinical implications, adding to an evidence-based, attachment-informed roadmap for young couples to achieve forgiveness.

ATTACHMENT INJURY-RELATED RESPONSES FROM THE OFFENDING PARTNER AND FORGIVENESS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

A strong connection with a romantic partner is related to a wide range of positive psychosocial and physical outcomes. Meaningful bonds with a romantic partner can provide a sense of belonging, safety, and worthiness. Connection in romantic relationships seems to be forged, at least in part, from the willingness to render ourselves vulnerable to another human being (Johnson, 2013). Vulnerability is an intensely personal sense of risk, uncertainty, and emotional exposure (Brown, 2015). A consequence of being vulnerable is that we can be hurt by the person that we put our love and trust in (Fincham, 2000). In romantic relationships, people often experience incidents that leave them feeling abandoned, rejected or betrayed by their partner, particularly in a time of need, loss or transition (Johnson, Makinen, & Millikin, 2001). These types of incidents have been labelled attachment injuries and often lead to a range of emotions such as sadness, resentment, fear, anger and loss of trust. Understanding the impact of and recovery from attachment injuries in romantic relationships has become increasingly more critical to understanding relationship well-being (Halchuk, Makinen, & Johnson, 2010).

Forgiveness towards others that cause attachment injuries has been shown to have both interpersonal and intrapersonal benefits (Fincham, 2010). Research has demonstrated that when a transgression has occurred, both the victim and the transgressor benefit psychologically (Karremans, Van Lange, Ouwerkerk, & Kluwer, 2003; Orcutt, 2006; Toussaint & Webb, 2005) as well as physiologically (Harris & Thoresen, 2005,

Lawler, Younger, Piferi, Billington, Jobe, Edmondson, & Jones, 2003) from the offering of forgiveness. In the context of romantic relationships, forgiveness can serve to not only promote individual well-being, but also to repair relationship damage that a rupture in trust caused. There are several factors that may shape the path to forgiveness. The present study examined the role of injury-related responses from the offending partner in promoting forgiveness in a romantic relationship.

Conceptualization of Forgiveness

In romantic relationships, it is not uncommon for a member of the couple to engage in behaviors that leave the other member feeling hurt, rejected, betrayed, and/or abandoned. Such an incident, creating the perception of an unresponsive and inaccessible partner, especially in a time of critical need, may be labelled attachment injuries (Johnson et al., 2001). Attachment injuries can be clinically significant phenomena due specifically to their relational nature, resulting in a rupture in the couple's attachment bond, and creating and sustaining negative interactional cycles that perpetuate relationship distress (Naaman, Pappas, Makinen, Zuccarini, & Johnson-Douglas, 2005). These injuries carry the potential to redefine the offending partner's standard for dependability and define a relationship as insecure, consequently contributing to long-lasting relationship difficulties (Johnson et al., 2001). Other terms have been used in the relationship literature to describe attachment injuries, such as interpersonal transgressions and relationship offenses, but for the purposes of this study, we will use attachment injuries when speaking of these events. Examples of attachment injuries can range from sexual or emotional infidelity to neglect and ridicule. From a conceptual perspective, such injuries are hypothesized to have a negative impact on the individuals as well as the relationship

(Toussaint & Webb, 2005). More specifically, attachment injuries have been found to impact individuals' psychological well-being as well as their physiological health adversely (Robles & Kane, 2014). In terms of impact on relationships they can, at least to some extent, be experienced as a rejection or devaluation of the injured partner (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Feeney, 2005) and have consequently been shown to impact trust, relationship satisfaction and commitment to partner. As discussed earlier, some relationships manage to survive such injuries, but the survival of the relationship alone does not indicate that healing from the attachment injury has occurred. In fact, research has shown that often the attenuation of the injured partner's negative feelings and subsequent non-termination of the relationship more likely indicate underlying weaknesses in the quality of the union than skill and satisfaction in the relationship (Roloff, Soule, & Carey, 2001).

Given the negative impact that attachment injuries can have on romantic relationship functioning, it is critical to better understand processes that help repair relationship damage. Forgiveness is a process that appears to help facilitate recovery from the damage caused by attachment injuries.

An agreed upon definition of forgiveness does not exist. One commonly used definition was put forth by McCollough and colleagues. They defined forgiveness as prosocial change toward a perceived transgressor (1997). Researchers have proposed viewing forgiveness as a change that occurs within the victim of the transgression and as a combination of effectively reducing their negative response tendencies towards the transgressor as well as increasing positive responses. For instance, the negative desire to seek revenge from, or avoid contact with the transgressor, often seen as interrelated in

close relationships, would be overcome through forgiveness. The reemergence of positive responses such as compassion and empathy towards the transgressor would also characterize forgiveness, and as a more easily observable feature, is often seen by the layperson as more highly representative of forgiveness (Kearns & Fincham, 2005).

It is also worth noting that forgiving an offense, often closely intertwined with other interpersonal processes, is distinct from forgetting the offense or removing it from one's awareness, condoning it or changing one's view of the act as offensive and removing the need for forgiveness altogether. Even more interestingly, forgiveness is by no means synonymous with reconciliation – the interpersonal process that leads to restoration of the relationship and the trust therein. Forgiving a wrongdoing is an intrapersonal occurrence and does not depend on, nor imply reconciliation.

Factors that Influence Forgiveness

Forgiveness has been shown in research to be influenced by multiple factors. McCullough et al. (1998) provided a framework that organized factors that influence forgiveness. They described the four broad determinants of forgiveness as (a) the personality level which refers to the traits and cognitions of the injured individual, (b) the relationship level which points to the characteristics of the relationship that has been impacted by the transgression such as satisfaction and commitment, (c) the offense level where the features of the offense and related actions on the offender's part are the primary consideration, and (d) the social-cognitive level which refers to how the injured partner thinks and feels about the offense and the offender. Research and clinical intervention have typically focused on the personality and the social-cognitive levels that influence forgiveness, both in effect, focusing on characteristics of the injured partner

who is presumably tasked with forgiveness. The offense level of determinants on the other hand, which includes not only the nature and severity of the offense, but the extent to which the offender acknowledges its impact, takes responsibility for it, and actively seeks forgiveness in the form of an apology or atoning behavior, has been neglected to a large extent. Responsibility-taking, apologies and repentance are often seen as desirable but nonessential steps along the way to forgiveness (James, 2007).

Notably, Fehr, Gelfand, and Nag (2010) conducted a meta-analysis and discussed a tripartite forgiveness typology that emerged from the literature. The domains that they highlighted as guiding interpersonal forgiveness included the injured partner's (a) cognitions, (b) affect, and (c) constraints. The latter two domains appear to have direct parallels with the social-cognitive and relationship levels respectively in McCullough's four determinants of forgiveness. The injured partner's cognitions, according to Fehr et al., involve offense-related considerations that promote the sensemaking process that interprets the offender's intent and their ability to take responsibility and apologize, along with an understanding of the offender's perspective on the harm it caused to the injured partner and to the relationship.

Other factors associated with the victim, that are studied as significant to influencing forgiveness include personality-specific factors like trait forgiveness, agreeableness, which McCullough briefly discussed, socio-cultural factors like ideas on morality and religiosity and how they relate to forgiveness, as well as transgression-specific actions on the victim's part such as perspective-taking and empathy. These studies have contributed a great deal in enhancing our understanding of when and how forgiveness can occur within the victim and in what ways it can be beneficial for them.

Relationship-specific factors, however, have not been studied as much for their ability to predict forgiveness. Identifying these factors along with when and how they add meaningfully to the occurrence of forgiveness deserves more scientific attention than it has received so far.

The Attachment-Injury Resolution Model

Although offender behavior has received relatively little focused research in relation to forgiveness, Makinen & Johnson (2006) developed a model to repair couples' relationships impacted by attachment injuries which incorporated both injured partner behaviors as well as offending partner behaviors in one framework. The Attachment-Injury Resolution Model (AIRM) includes 8 distinct steps – a sequence of injured partner behaviors along with corresponding behaviors on the offending partner's end. The 8 steps include: (a) description of the incident (injured partner), (b) feeling defensive and/or numb (offending partner), (c) articulating impact of injury (injured partner), (d) hearing/understanding significance (offending partner), (e) vulnerable disclosure (injured partner), (f) acknowledgement of responsibility (offending partner), (g) request for caring/comfort (injured partner), and (h) caring/comforting response (offending partner).

As noted, relatively little research has been conducted on the impact of the offending partner's injury-related behaviors on forgiveness. To build onto this literature, the present study focused on Steps 4, 6 and 8 of the AIRM. Steps 1 and 2 of the AIRM have been described as markers, on each partner's end, that an attachment injury has occurred. Step 2 pertains specifically to the offending partner, and it describes the resistance and numbness associated with the beginning of the resolution process and as such is not considered as an active behavior here.

The AIRM delineates the resolution process into three phases, each of which conclude with an offending partner behavior – referred to as steps 4, 6 and 8 in the model. Step 4 marks the offending partner demonstrating empathic effort as they hear and understand the significance of the injury for their partner. Step 6 marks emotional engagement and responsibility taking for the damage caused by the injury to the injured partner and to the relationship. Step 8 marks offender responsiveness through expression of care and offering comfort which ultimately promote healing from the attachment injury. Literature related to each of these three areas is described next. It is important to note that this list of behaviors is not exhaustive, and only attempts to capture the core and critical offending partner behaviors that are associated with forgiveness.

Empathic effort and understanding. Step 4 of the AIRM has been described as the offending partner experiencing empathy towards their partner and understanding the impact of the attachment injury for them. Empathy is the capacity to understand and feel what another is experiencing by borrowing their frame of reference, and acting out of empathy entails placing oneself in the position of another and sharing their emotional perspective (Ulloa, Hammett, Meda, & Rubalcaba, 2017; Ciarrochi, Parker, Sahdra, Kashdan, Kiuru, & Conigrave, 2017; McCullough, Worthington Jr., & Rachal, 1997). Empathy has been studied in the context of relational attachment injuries and as a function of forgiveness, but often only on the injured partner's side. However, as Hill (2010) critically points out, a vulnerable and powerless injured partner cannot be expected, and may not even be able to feel empathy following an injustice or a breach of trust. The offending partner's capacity for empathy, at this stage, may therefore be viewed as essential for the process of healing to begin. Empathy has been described as

having two components, the first of which is receiving and recognizing emotions which entails the ability to detect, identify and understand emotional signals from others; or as Cohen, Schulz, Weiss, and Waldinger (2012) described it, empathic accuracy. The second component of empathy is empathetic effort and the perception thereof, which entails empathetic behavior in the form of prosocial curiosity and/or altruistic motivation and action (Maibom, 2012) effectively creating a felt sense in one's partner of being seen and understood. Notably, this component is a step further from feeling emotional empathy and has been demonstrated to be positively associated with relationship satisfaction (Cohen et al., 2012; Cramer & Jowett, 2010). Even though considering empathy at this second level adds a crucial layer to our conceptualization of how it impacts a dyadic relationship, empathic effort by itself has not been studied extensively. The research that has examined it and its impact in the specific context of close relationships has done so by examining the cognitive and affective elements of the experience of the recipient of this effort (Kerem, Fishman, & Josselson, 2001) and therefore uses the term "perceived empathic effort" to describe it (Cohen et al., 2012; Cramer & Jowett, 2010). This approach to defining empathic effort not only offers the only other known measure for it other than a self-report from the empathizer, but also effectively folds in the crucial other in an empathic interaction effectively as one examines it. Notably, empathic effort has not been studied in the context of attachment injuries and how it is related to forgiveness.

Responsibility-taking and apology. Step 6 of the AIRM describes the offending partner's acknowledgement of responsibility for their part in the injurious event and expressing regret or remorse to their partner. Responsibility-taking refers to the act of

owning up to or assuming accountability for an action and more importantly, its outcomes (Schumann & Dweck, 2014). The idea of taking responsibility when a wrong has occurred, is often associated with principles of moral justice. Broadly speaking, moral justice is judged through several lenses – two of which are prescriptivity – associated inherently with obligation, and generalizability – assumed to be applicable to anyone in a similar situation (Neff, Turiel, & Anshel, 2002), which serve to highlight the injured partner's perspective on accountability. In the context of group transgressions too, the question of morality and how it reflects on the group's character is associated with the acceptance of responsibility (Bilali, Iqbal, & Erisen, 2019). In the context of transgressions in individual close personal relationships specifically, responsibility-taking could depend on transgressor's beliefs around personal malleability, and may involve accepting blame and expressing regret or repentance (Schumann & Dweck, 2014). The significance of responsibility-taking when a transgression has occurred, goes beyond benefiting the injured partner to also helping the transgressor move to a place of self-forgiveness and positive self-regard (Wenzel, Woodyatt, & Hedrick, 2012).

Apologizing or repentance, can be described as offender-initiated repair efforts aimed at shifting the victim's negative perception of the transgressor, serving to dissociate the offender's identity from the action committed and the damage it caused. Additionally, it has been shown to shift the injured partner's perceptions of the likelihood that a similar transgression may recur (Davis & Gold, 2011), and reduce the likelihood of negative consequences within the relationship such as punishment (Lewis, Parra, & Cohen, 2015). Research on forgiveness has demonstrated across the board that expression of repentance in the form of an apology combined with the admission of responsibility

has a positive effect on forgiveness (Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Förster, & Montada, 2004; Eaton, & Struthers, 2006; Hodgins & Liebeskind, 2003; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Weiner, 1986). For example, in 2004, Schmitt et al. examined five key components of an apology, i.e. Admitting Fault (AF), Admitting Damage (AD), Expressing Remorse (ER), Asking for Pardon (AP) and Offering Compensation (OC) from objective (explicitly included in the harm-doer's account) and subjective (as perceived by the victim) perspectives and how they each correlate with victim emotional reactions and their character attributions of the harm-doer in a friendship relationship, as well as how they interact with each other. They found that AF, AD and ER were about equally important in promoting favorable harm-doer attributions, and that interestingly, the positive or negative effect of AP was significantly mediated by AD and OC, highlighting that if the victim perceives that a harm-doer wishes to be forgiven without admitting the damage they caused or offering reparations, it is interpreted as insincere and hypocritical, leading to more negative outcomes than positive. They also found that an apology's objective components only affected the victim's reactions and attributions indirectly via subjective perceptions, emphasizing the greater importance of the victim's perception of the apology than the apology itself. Notably, this study also demonstrated that victim personality traits such as trait anger, irreconcilability and interpersonal trust only affected the results trivially, indicating that victim personality traits did not act as significant mediators in determining whether the above harm-doer verbal behaviors changed the victim's emotional reaction and character attributions towards them.

Comforting response and care. The AIRM relies heavily and focuses on the attachment figure's ability to first understand and take responsibility for, and

subsequently attend effectively to the injured partner's experience of emotional pain. Step 8 in the model describes the care and comfort with which the offender responds to the injured partner. Responsiveness is the behavioral demonstration to the injured partner that the offender connects with and wishes to respond to their hurtful experience of the injurious event (Pansera & La Guardia, 2012). Connection and responsiveness behaviors among happier couples include deescalating practices such as non-defensive listening, expressions of engagement and understanding, verbal and non-verbal indicators of validation of the injured partner's perspective (Gottman, 1998; Gottman, 2014; Birditt, Brown, Orbuch, & McIlvane, 2010). Validation refers to the transgressor's ability to accept and reinforce their partner's perspective on or response to the attachment injury and make them feel valued and respected (Maisel, Gable, & Strachman, 2008) and offering validation can be critical to the injured partner's perception of the transgressor's response. Perceived responsiveness is the degree to which the injured partner *feels* understood after the enactment of transgressor responsive behaviors and it has been shown to be integral to the theoretical conceptualization of positive individual and relationship outcomes such as intimacy, trust, empathy and attachment (Lemay, Clark, & Feeney, 2007; Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2006; Maisel et al., 2008). Notably, the *perception* of responsiveness has been observed to be more powerful in these conceptualizations than actual behaviors of responsiveness (Reis & Collins, 2000; Cramer & Jowett, 2010, Lemay et al., 2007) and therefore carry tremendous potential to facilitate forgiveness in the context of an attachment injury (Pansera & La Guardia, 2012).

Caring refers to the emotional aspect of the offending partner's response that communicates affection and concern for the injured partner. Caring behaviors may include the expression of love and the desire to shield them from emotional pain (Maisel et al., 2008) and are theorized to stem from a protective instinct which is characteristic of an attachment bond that drives members of a close relationship to create safety for themselves and their partners in response to a rupture or the threat of a rupture. This protective instinct demonstrated through comforting and caring behaviors is important in reestablishing a secure attachment and for this reason, is a prominent feature in Emotion-Focused Therapy in the context of couple relationships recovering from attachment injuries (Johnson et al., 2001). These behaviors serve to create and strengthen the injured partner's perception of being understood, validated and cared for by the transgressor, and to subsequently promote prosocial motivation for transformation of the injured partner's feelings.

Present Study

The central aim of this study was to assess the direct relation between repair-oriented attachment behaviors by the offending partner (i.e. empathy, responsibility-taking and responsiveness) and forgiveness within the context of attachment injuries. It was hypothesized that the attachment-related behaviors by the offending partner will be positively correlated with forgiveness.

There is a bidirectional relation between forgiveness and relationship quality (Fincham, 2000; Paleari, Regalia, & Fincham, 2005; Fincham, Beach, & Davila 2004). The more satisfying a relationship, the higher the likelihood of "benign interpretations of a transgression" in the relationship, which in turn promotes forgiveness. Attachment

styles have been associated closely with the occurrence of forgiveness. Anxiously or avoidantly attached individuals, equipped with fewer adaptive strategies (Kimmes & Durtschi, 2016), an increased tendency for negative attributions, and lack of empathy (Lawler-Row, Younger, Piferi, & Jones, 2006), have been observed to experience less forgiveness than securely attached individuals. Relationship satisfaction and attachment styles were statistically controlled to ensure the relation between forgiveness and offender behavior were not impacted by these other variables.

Method

Participants and Procedures

Participants included 18- and 19-year-old undergraduate students attending a university in the Southern region of the U.S. They were recruited through the department of psychology research subject pool. Specifically, a notice was posted on the department's subject pool that provided a brief description of the study. Participants who signed up for the study were provided a link to the consent form on Qualtrics, a secure, online platform used for the collection of questionnaire-based data. Once participants reviewed the online consent form and agreed to participate, they were assigned a research number. The study was approved by the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln indicated no further approval was needed.

Participants that consented to the study were asked to complete several short answer questions and several self-report questionnaires. Specifically, participants were first asked to recall three events/circumstances in which they felt wronged or hurt by a romantic partner (i.e., emotional injuries) and to identify the event/circumstance in which

they felt most wronged or hurt. They were then asked to answer questions related to forgiveness for the most hurtful event/circumstance and to complete several measures of psychosocial functioning.

Seven hundred seventy-eight individuals started the online survey. A number of criteria were used to select the sample for this study. First, individuals were included in the study if they were either 18 or 19 years-old at the time of the survey (n = 556) and reported currently being in a romantic relationship that they described as "married", "engaged" or "dating exclusively" (n = 105). Additionally, three validity questions were embedded in the survey items. The questions were inserted across study questionnaires and instructed participants to mark a specific response option (e.g., please mark "agree" for this question). Participants who responded correctly to 2 of the 3 validity questions were included in the study (n = 80). Participants were included in the study if they reported a transgression in their relationship that they perceived as hurtful and caused them emotional pain at the time that it occurred. Specifically, participants were asked, "When it happened, the event/circumstance was hurtful and caused me emotional pain". If they responded with "agree" or "strongly agree" they were considered to have experienced the transgression as hurtful and were included in the analysis sample (n = 50). The final sample was predominantly white (72%) and described their gender as female (92%).

Once participants had identified the hurtful event, they were asked open-ended questions about how long ago it took place, how it affected them immediately following the event and at the time of the survey, and the emotions they experienced at both times. They were then asked about the occurrence of apologies or other repair attempts as well

as recurrence of the hurtful event, before finally being asked whether they had forgiven their partners.

Measures

Several questions were asked about relationship repair-related behaviors. Since established measures do not exist to assess the offender behaviors being examined, these questions were developed based on the principal investigator's clinical experiences. They were designed to capture processes that facilitated relationship repair. For this study, items were mapped onto the Attachment-Injury Resolution Model (AIRM) framework.

Empathic Effort and Understanding. Four survey items focused on assessing the injured partner's perception of the transgressor's empathic effort and understanding (Step 4 of the AIRM). The participants were asked to rate on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), if their partner "understood how the event/circumstance affected me", "took steps to try to better understand how the event/circumstance affected me", "was aware of how the event/circumstance affected me" and "acknowledged that the event/circumstance had an impact on me". A scale for empathic effort and understanding was created by calculating the mean of the four items (α = .97). Higher scores indicate greater empathic effort as perceived by the injured partner.

Responsibility-Taking and Apology. Three survey items asked the participants about their partners' efforts towards assuming responsibility and apologizing. On a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), they rated if their partner "was sorry for the event/circumstance", "apologized for the event/circumstance" and "took responsibility for his/her role in the circumstance". A

scale for responsibility-taking and apology was created by calculating the mean of these items (α = .93). Higher scores indicate greater responsibility taken as perceived by the injured partner.

Responsive Comfort and Caring. Three survey items inquired about transgressor responsiveness and caring behaviors towards the injured partner. On a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), participants rated if their partner "validated my feelings about the event/circumstance", "was responsive to my feelings about the event/circumstance in a way that was helpful for me" and if "after the event/circumstance, my partner was there to protect me from hurt or emotional pain". A scale for responsive comfort and caring was created by calculating the mean of these items (α = .86). Higher scores indicate greater care and responsiveness as perceived by the injured partner.

Forgiveness. The Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Inventory (TRIM-18) was used to measure forgiveness among injured partners (McCullough, Root & Cohen, 2006). This is an 18-item measure that uses a 5-point Likert scale 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) to evaluate three subscales of forgiveness, including seven items to assess a tendency for avoidance (e.g., "I am trying to keep as much distance between us as possible.") with α = .91, five items to assess the desire for revenge (e.g., "I'll make him/her pay.") with α = .91, and six items assessing the motivation for benevolence (e.g., "Even though his/her actions hurt me, I have goodwill for him/her.") with α = .85. On the avoidance and revenge subscales, higher scores indicate greater avoidance and revenge-seeking motivation. The benevolence subscale, on the other hand, is positively worded and higher scores on it indicate greater prosocial motivation. A

measure of total forgiveness was also computed (α = .94). Each of the subscales have high internal consistency (McCullough et al. 2003; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). In addition, participants were asked whether they had forgiven their partner for the transgression. They were asked to respond "Yes" or "No".

Relationship Satisfaction. The Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI-4) is a 4-item self-report scale used to measure global relationship satisfaction within a romantic relationship (Funk & Rogge, 2007). The first item pertaining to the degree of happiness in the relationship is rated on a 7-point scale from 0 (extremely unhappy) to 6 (perfect) and the remaining three on a 6-point scale from 0 (not at all true) to 5 (completely true). The measure was scored as a sum of the 4 items on the scale. Higher overall scores indicate greater relationship satisfaction. The internal consistency for the measure was α = .95.

Attachment. The Experiences in Close Relationships – Relationship Structures (ECR-RS) was used to measure adult attachment within a romantic relationship. This is a 9-item self-report instrument designed to assess attachment patterns in a variety of close relationships, in this case, with a romantic partner (Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary, & Brumbaugh, 2011). It is scored on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) and assesses attachment anxiety (e.g., "I'm afraid that my romantic partner may abandon me.") with α = .90 and attachment avoidance (e.g. "I prefer not to show my romantic partner how I feel deep down.") with α = .94.

Impact on Relationship. Participants were asked to report on the impact the transgression had on their relationship. They were provided with five statements about the impact of the transgression on the relationship and asked to select the statement that

best characterized the impact of the transgression. The statements included the following: “My relationship with my partner was not very good before the event/circumstance and the event/circumstance made things between us even worse.”, “My relationship with my partner was good before the event/circumstance and the event/circumstance had a negative influence on our relationship.”, “My relationship with my partner was good before the event/circumstance and the event/circumstance brought my partner and I closer together.”, “My relationship with my partner was not very good before the event/circumstance and the event/circumstance brought my partner and I closer together.” and “My relationship with my partner was not very good before the event/circumstance and the event/circumstance did not really change our relationship.”

Data Analysis

Prior to conducting analyses, the procedures outlined by Tabachnik & Fidell (2001) for cleaning data were followed. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and ranges) were calculated for all study measures. Associations between study measures were examined (chi-squares for associations between categorical variables and zero-order correlation between continuous measures). As noted, the primary aim of the study is to examine the association between attachment-related offending partner behavior and forgiveness after an attachment injury has occurred. A series of regression analyses were conducted where the measures of the AIRM, namely (a) empathic effort, (b) responsibility-taking and (c) comforting responsiveness, were the independent variables. The dependent variables were the three measures of forgiveness (avoidance, revenge-seeking, benevolence).

To control for the effects of relationship satisfaction and attachment styles, these two variables were statistically controlled for in the regression analyses. We also controlled for gender.

Results

Results indicated that 62.5% (50/80) of participants perceived the transgression as hurtful when it occurred. The study focused on these participants. Only including couples who perceived the transgression as hurtful offered the ability to examine repair processes in relationships where a hurtful transgression occurred.

Descriptive statistics for primary study variables are reported in Table 1. In terms of perceived transgressor behaviors, the average value for Empathic Effort was 5.06 (*SD* = 1.34) and for Responsibility Taking was 5.14 (*SD* = 1.18). Both values indicate high levels of empathic behavior and assumption of blame from the transgressor as reported by the injured partner (i.e., average values fell between "agree [5]" and "strongly agree [6]" on the Likert scale). The mean value for Comforting Responsiveness was 4.76 (*SD* = 1.29) indicating moderately high levels of comfort offered to the injured partner related to the transgression (i.e., average values fell between "agree [4]" and "somewhat agree [5]" on the Likert scale).

With regard to forgiveness, the average levels of Avoidance (*M* = 1.63, *SD* = .75) and Revenge-Seeking (*M* = 1.42, *SD* = .67) were low (i.e. average values fell between "strongly disagree [1]" and "disagree [2]" on the Likert scale). The average level of Benevolence (*M* = 4.19, *SD* = .72) was high (i.e., average values fell between "agree [4]" and "strongly agree [5]" on the Likert scale). Consistent with these levels, average level of overall forgiveness was high at a mean value of 4.63 (*SD* = .62). Eighty percent of

participants reported having forgiven their partners based on the question, “Have you forgiven your partner for the event/circumstance?”.

The mean reported level of Relationship Satisfaction for this sample was 15.88 (*SD* = 5.21) on the Couples Satisfaction Index. The cutoff indicating notable relationship dissatisfaction on the CSI-4 is below 13.5, indicating that couples in this sample tended to be satisfied in their romantic relationship after the hurtful event occurred. It is important to note that 34% of the sample fell below the clinical cutoff. Attachment measures showed an average value of 3.08 (*SD* = 1.95) for Attachment Anxiety and of 1.82 (*SD* = 1.06) for Attachment Avoidance on the Experiences in Close Relationships – Relationship Structures (ECR-RS). These values indicate that couples in this sample reported low levels of attachment avoidance and low to moderate levels of attachment anxiety in their romantic relationship with average responses to questions about their experience of anxiety and avoidance in their relationship ranging between “somewhat disagree” and “strongly disagree”.

Participants were asked to report how the transgression impacted their relationship. Findings indicated that 42% of participants indicated their relationship was “good before the event/circumstance” and that the hurtful event brought the couple “closer together”. Thirty percent reported that their relationship was “good before the event/circumstance” but that the hurtful event “had a negative influence” on the relationship. Twenty-two percent reported that their relationship was “good before the event/circumstance” and that the hurtful event “did not really change” their relationship. Only 4% reported that their relationship was “not very good before the event/circumstance” and that it “made things even worse” between the couple, and 2%

reported that their relationship was “not very good before the event/circumstance” and that the hurtful event brought the couple “closer together”.

Associations among study variables are presented in Table 2. Findings indicated there were strong positive associations between offender behaviors (i.e., Empathic Effort, Responsibility-Taking, and Comforting Responsiveness; *r*s ranged from .90 to .93). Results showed there were moderate to large significant relations in the expected directions between measures of forgiveness. Specifically, Avoidance and Revenge-Seeking were positively associated with each other (r = .68) and Benevolence and Total Forgiveness were positively associated (r = .84). Additionally, the relations of Avoidance and Revenge-Seeking to Benevolence and Total Forgiveness were negative (*r*s ranged from -.32 to -.97). Results further indicated there was a moderate positive association between Attachment Anxiety and Attachment Avoidance (r = .41).

Results presented in Table 2 revealed there were significant associations between offender behaviors and forgiveness. Specifically, large negative associations were found between Empathic Effort and Avoidance and large positive relations were found between Empathic Effort and Benevolence and Total Forgiveness. Empathic effort was not associated with Revenge Seeking. The same pattern of associations was observed between the other two offender behaviors (i.e., Responsibility Taking and Comforting Responsiveness) and the four measures of forgiveness.

Relations of control variables to offender behaviors and forgiveness are reported in Table 2. Findings indicated that Attachment Anxiety and Avoidance were negatively associated with the three measures of offender behaviors (*r*s ranged from -.66 to -.28). Results further revealed that Attachment Anxiety and Avoidance were related in the

expected directions to the four measures of forgiveness. Findings indicated that Relationship Satisfaction was positively associated with the three measures of offender behaviors (*r*s ranged from .48 to .58). Results further revealed that Relationship Satisfaction was related in the expected directions to the four measures of forgiveness.

To examine the association between the dichotomous single-item measure of forgiveness and the dichotomous indicator of relationship satisfaction (below and above the clinical cut-off), we conducted a chi square analysis. Findings indicated there was an association between non-forgiveness and relationship satisfaction ($\chi 2 = 17.47$, $p < .05$). Specifically, most participants who reported not having forgiven their partners also reported relationship satisfaction scores below the clinical cutoff.

The primary aim of the study was to examine whether offender behaviors predicted forgiveness over and above a set of control variables. Regression analyses were conducted to examine this aim. As noted, large positive associations were found among measures of offender behaviors. Given these associations, a decision was made to examine each offender behavior separately in regression analyses. Findings from regression analyses are reported in Table 3. As noted, dependent variables in the regression analyses were the four measures of forgiveness. Independent variables were gender, attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, relationship satisfaction, and offender behaviors (each offender behavior was examined separately). Findings indicated that offender behaviors (i.e., Empathic Effort, Responsibility-Taking, and Comforting Responsiveness) were significant positive predictors of Benevolence after statistically controlling for gender, attachment orientation, and relationship satisfaction (β ranged from .28 to .36). Interestingly, results revealed that offender behaviors were not

significant predictors of any other measures of forgiveness (i.e., Total Forgiveness, Avoidance, and Revenge Seeking) after statistically controlling for gender, attachment orientation, and relationship satisfaction.

Discussion

The existing body of literature on forgiveness focuses, to a large extent, on the pursuit and benefits of forgiveness from the perspective of the injured individual. This study used an attachment perspective to look closely at repair-oriented behaviors that a transgressor may engage in following a hurtful event or circumstance, and how they may be associated with the eventual occurrence of forgiveness among college-aged couples. The specific actionable offender behaviors we considered were Empathic Effort, Responsibility-Taking and Comforting Responsiveness. They were drawn from steps in the Attachment-Injury Resolution Model (AIRM) developed by Makinen and Johnson (2006) in their clinical work with couples recovering from an attachment injury. Findings highlighted the significance of attachment-related behaviors from the transgressor such as empathy (Cramer & Jowett, 2010), responsibility-taking (Davis & Gold, 2011; Schmitt et al., 2004), and comforting responsiveness (Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2006; Pansera & La Guardia, 2012) in the occurrence of forgiveness after a transgression, specifically by predicting increased benevolence from the injured partner. This study also added to existing evidence that non-forgiveness is associated with low relationship satisfaction (Allemand, Amberg, Zimprich, & Fincham, 2007).

Only participants that reported experiencing elevated levels of hurt or emotional pain from a transgression committed by their romantic partner were included. By including only participants who reported having experienced hurt/emotional pain as a

result of the attachment injury, we were able to focus this investigation on couples that had something significant to recover from. We found that a majority of couples in the sample (62.5%) who reported a transgression, experienced it as hurtful or causing emotional pain, shedding some light on how common it is for such events to have a damaging effect on romantic relationships. This estimate is important because we know little about the prevalence of attachment injuries or transgressions in non-clinical couples. We included this as a selection criterion so as to specifically target couples that identified the event or circumstance as painful, to whom the findings from this study may be most relevant. In addition, however, it was also interesting that for 37.5% of the group that experienced a transgression, it did not evoke a strong sense of emotional pain. This finding is consistent with prior work that suggests transgressions are experienced differently by each couple (Feeney, 2004) based on circumstances surrounding it and may have varying impacts for couples (Sidelinger, Frisby, & McMullen, 2009).

The results provided some insights into the impact of transgressions on perceived relationship functioning. Findings indicated that the hurtful event/circumstance and the events following it brought some couples "closer together". One possible interpretation of this perception is that for some couples the hurtful event or attachment injury created an opportunity for the couple to have important repair-oriented conversations about their relationship. Attachment injuries, however, can have varying and complex effects on couples (Feeney, 2009). About a third of the participants reported that their relationships changed from good to bad or bad to worse after the occurrence of the hurtful event, emphasizing once again that these events hold the power to have a distinct negative influence on romantic relationships. But overall, we found evidence that for most couples

the transgression seemed to have relatively low impact. As discussed below, this is likely because of high levels of repair-oriented behaviors.

Descriptive statistics revealed that this sample engaged in high levels of repair-oriented behaviors and high levels of forgiveness. This offers support for existing knowledge that forgiveness is closely tied with the enactment of repair-related behaviors within the relationship (Zuccarini, Johnson, Dalgleish, & Makinen, 2013). The findings observed in this study allow us to extrapolate about the relationship tendencies of non-clinical college-aged couples and how they respond to hurtful events within their relationships with a high capacity for enacting as well as accepting repair-oriented behaviors. Research has found that the ability for perspective-taking, prosocial moral judgement, self-reflective empathic reasoning increases during the developmental period between ages 15 to 26 and is also associated with declining personal distress in individuals this age (Eisenberg, Cumberland, Guthrie, Murphy, & Shepard, 2005). It could therefore be hypothesized that these prosocial skills and behaviors, seen to be learned during development in adolescence and early adulthood (Kanacri, Pastorelli, Eisenberg, Zuffiano, Castellani, & Carara, 2014), set up college-aged individuals for an increased ability to enact the attachment behaviors that are closely connected with effective relationship repair. This also leads to interesting questions about how the couples observed in this study compare to longer-term non-clinical couples. Assuming that prosocial skills developed during adolescence and early adulthood promote repair-oriented behaviors, it would be interesting to examine how these skills fare over time and as the length and commitment of the relationships steadily increase. Currently, we only have clinical samples to contrast this study's sample with, but looking at non-clinical

couples at a different stage in their relationship could be an illuminating new line of inquiry. Research has not yet looked specifically at this group; how higher stakes in the relationship and more experiences of undergoing and potentially recovering from attachment injuries among other factors impact them. Studying how these factors together influence the level at which repair-oriented offender behaviors occur would be highly informative.

We found that all three measures of offender behaviors as described in the Attachment-Injury Resolution Model (AIRM) were highly correlated. This indicates that occurrences of empathic effort, responsibility-taking and comforting responsiveness are closely intertwined among each other, supporting existing literature linking these behaviors to each other (Davis & Gold, 2011; Johnson, 2013) as well as to the eventual resolution of attachment injuries. This serves to confirm previous findings that the process of successfully recovering from an attachment injury involves a comprehensive response from the transgressor (that touches upon each of the components described in the AIRM (Zuccarini et al., 2013). The steps outlined therein offer valuable insight into the critical milestones along the way to forgiveness (Makinen & Johnson, 2006), but the particular sequence in which they take place to best address the couple's experience of the attachment injury itself as well as how it impacts the relationship overall remains relatively undefined. In fact, another possible inference we may be able to draw from how closely connected these behaviors are, is that they possibly occur either simultaneously or once repair-efforts begin, in quick succession after one another. Additional research that examines couples following an attachment injury across time may be highly informative. A daily diary study, investigating logged occurrences of

transgressions, behaviors the transgressors respond with, as well as subsequent reflections from the injured partners would add invaluably to our understanding of the sequence of repair behaviors as they occur and how they impact aspects of recovery and the relationship in general.

Findings indicated that the offender behaviors were unique predictors of benevolence but not avoidance or revenge-seeking. In other words, transgressors who engaged in empathy, responsibility-taking and comforting responsiveness after the transgression, were more likely to be viewed from a perspective of benevolence and consequently, to be judged less harshly by their partners (Fincham, Beach, & Davila, 2004) and their partners are more likely to weigh the positive aspects of their relationship more highly than the damage caused by the transgression (Strelan, McKee, Calic, Cook, & Shaw, 2013). The results support the multi-dimensional nature of forgiveness and the importance of considering the dimensions independently (Fehr et al., 2010; McCullough, Fincham, & Tsang, 2003).

As noted, each of the offender behaviors were unique predictors of benevolence, one of the three sub-scales for forgiveness. Existing knowledge about close relationships and attachment injuries tells us that the ability to forgive those that are closest to us is vital for the well-being of long-term relationships and the individuals therein (Fincham, Beach, & Davila, 2004; Sheldon, Gilchrist-Petty, & Lessley, 2014). The literature points out that for forgiveness to occur, the mere decrease of negative responses (avoidance, revenge-seeking) may be a one-dimensional path suited only to relationships that do not continue following the offense. However, in continuing relationships, aside from reducing negative responses, a discernible increase in positive responses (benevolence)

from the injured partner towards the offender is a critical milestone along the forgiveness journey (Fincham, 2010; Worthington, 2005). Fincham (2015) has also described benevolence as "fundamental" to the occurrence of forgiveness and eventual relationship recovery, drawing attention to the "attitude of real goodwill" (Fincham, 2000) that moves an individual to see their offender with compassion and their intent as benign, *despite* the emotional pain caused by the event/circumstance. However, most writing around benevolence has explored it as an intrapersonal process that unfolds within the injured partner alone. The finding that ties the offender behaviors being examined to benevolence, is a unique and essential contribution of this study. It is this new finding that makes one of the most significant elements of forgiveness accessible to the transgressor, empowering them to proactively promote the occurrence of benevolence in their partner, and consequently, forgiveness. This knowledge could be one of the first steps in creating an attachment-informed roadmap to forgiveness, now wielded jointly by both partners in the relationship.

Offender behaviors were not unique predictors of avoidance and revenge-seeking. This leads us to infer that the injured partner's impulse for self-protection through avoidance as well as desire for retribution as a result of undergoing an attachment injury is only marginally influenced, if at all, by the transgressor engaging in repair-oriented behaviors after considering relationship satisfaction and attachment tendencies. This finding appears to support the persistent presence of avoidant behaviors in response to experiencing emotional pain at the hands of one's partner – a phenomenon that attachment literature has examined in detail (Feeney, 2005; Johnson et al., 2001; Halchuk et al., 2010). This conclusion also complements existing literature that describes revenge-

seeking as a profoundly human part of experiencing and processing an attachment injury (Gollwitzer, Meder, & Schmitt, 2011), a journey independent of the transgressor's response, and an essential facet of the experience of being rejected or betrayed by a close loved one (Fitness, 2001). Future research that investigates these negative responses to attachment injuries, avoidance and revenge-seeking, as responses to attachment injuries specifically pertaining to romantic relationships may help further define the path to relationship repair and improved satisfaction. It may be helpful to explore with the help of qualitative data, the vulnerable experiences of rejection, devaluation and/or sense of injury that drive the sustained experience of these negative responses and what intrapersonal and interpersonal processes influence a change in this experience.

Several limitations of the study should be noted. These included a small sample size, predominantly consisting of white, female participants. This somewhat limits our ability to extend findings to repair-oriented offender behaviors and their relation with forgiveness among couples who identify with other genders and ethnic/cultural groups effectively. Even though the age group this sample belonged to offered valuable insight into the tendencies of college-aged romantic relationships, we still know relatively little about how longer-term relationships among older partners would respond to and recover from attachment injuries of this nature. This was a convenience sample selected based on participant interest, and therefore is embedded with some bias related to reasons for participation or non-participation, as well as the risk for under- or over-representation among college-aged individuals. Additionally, this study used data from only one member of each couple. This admittedly offers a one-sided understanding of the hurtful event or circumstance that was described as well as the subsequent behaviors of the other

partner. The measures used to collect data on empathic effort, responsibility-taking and comforting responsiveness from the transgressor were created for this study as standardized measures able to quantify these constructs do not yet exist. In addition to this, the data used was self-reported and therefore must be acknowledged for its subjectivity. Finally, the study's cross-sectional design limits the depth of knowledge we can draw from it as it, critically, pertains to the passage of time and how it impacts the occurrence of forgiveness (McCullough, Fincham, & Tsang, 2003).

In conclusion, this study made some important contributions to how well we understand young romantic relationships and their process of recovering from attachment injuries. Findings supported the components Attachment-Injury Resolution Model (AIRM) even though the sequence of these components remains to be explored in further detail through future research. It also provided additional evidence that the enactment of repair-oriented behaviors carries the potential for increased benevolence towards the transgressor within the injured partner, and eventual forgiveness. This study highlighted the benefits of directing our scrutiny to the general, non-clinical population for their potential in elucidating self-repair mechanisms as have been demonstrated by the sample used in this study. The development of standardized measures that target the offender variables this study talked about could be yet another fruitful line of research that would add much needed clarity to future investigation in this direction. Additionally, the study also highlighted the potential benefits for relationship repair to be a more prominent part of relational psychoeducation or training in higher education settings so as to bolster the many strengths we found these young couples have while also establishing a way to

identify couples who do not possess these strengths and create resources for them to draw from to promote relationship and individual well-being.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	*SD*	*Range*	*α*	*Skewness*	*Kurtosis*
Empathic Effort	5.06	1.34	1.00 – 6.00	.97	-1.77	2.55
Responsibility-Taking	5.14	1.18	1.00 – 6.00	.93	-1.85	3.22
Comforting Responsiveness	4.76	1.29	1.00 – 6.00	.86	-1.34	1.46
Avoidance	1.63	.75	1.00 - 4.00	.91	1.37	1.61
Revenge-Seeking	1.42	.67	1.00 - 4.20	.91	2.35	7.06
Benevolence	4.19	.71	1.50 – 5.00	.85	-1.19	2.50
Forgiveness Total	4.36	.62	2.56 – 5.00	.94	-1.08	.62
Attachment Avoidance	1.82	1.06	1.00 – 5.50	.90	1.63	2.71
Attachment Anxiety	3.08	1.95	1.00 – 7.00	.94	.39	-1.28
Relationship Satisfaction	19.88	5.21	4.00 – 25.00	.95	-1.11	.78

Note. N = 50.

Table 2: Zero-Order Correlations

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
1. Empathic Effort	1.00									
2. Responsibility-Taking	.93***	1.00								
3. Comforting Responsiveness	.92***	.89***	1.00							
4. Avoidance	-.50***	-.59***	-.56***	1.00						
5. Revenge-Seeking	-.03	-.13	-.12	.68***	1.00					
6. Benevolence	.57***	.65***	.62***	-.77***	-.32*	1.00				
7. Forgiveness Total	.46**	.56***	.54***	-.97***	-.74***	.84***	1.00			
8. Attachment Avoidance	-.57***	-.66***	-.62***	.71***	.36**	-.61***	-.67***	1.00		
9. Attachment Anxiety	-.28	-.35*	-.38**	.61	.51***	-.48***	-.62***	.41**	1.00	
10. Relationship Satisfaction	.48***	.58***	.56***	-.75***	-.32*	.70***	.72***	-.75***	-.58***	1.00

Notes. $N = 50$. ***p < .001. **p < .01. *p < .05. All values are two-tailed.

Table 3: Regression Table

	B	*β*	*Coef f. SE*	*t*	*p*	*F*	*df*	*p*	*Adj. R^2*
Forgiveness Total									
Empathic Effort						15.39	5	.00	.595
Biological Sex	-.07	-.03	.21	-.36	.71				
Relationship Satisfaction	.03	.27	.01	1.75	.08				
Attachment Avoidance	-.17	-.28	.08	-1.93	.06				
Attachment Anxiety	-.10	-.31	.03	-2.82	.01				
Empathic Effort	.03	.08	.05	.72	.47				
Responsibility-Taking						15.68	5	.00	.600
Biological Sex	-.06	-.02	.21	-.29	.77				
Relationship Satisfaction	.03	.26	.02	1.67	.10				
Attachment Avoidance	-.15	-.26	.09	-1.72	.09				
Attachment Anxiety	-.10	-.31	.03	-2.81	.00				
Responsibility-Taking	.06	.12	.06	1.03	.30				
Comforting Responsiveness						15.43	5	.00	.596
Biological Sex	-.07	-.03	.21	-.35	.72				
Relationship Satisfaction	.03	.27	.02	1.73	.09				
Attachment Avoidance	-.16	-.28	.09	-1.88	.06				
Attachment Anxiety	-.09	-.30	.03	-2.73	.01				
Comforting Responsiveness	.04	.09	.05	.774	.44				

	B	*β*	*Coef f. SE*	*t*	*p*	*F*	*df*	*p*	*Adj. R^2*
Forgiveness: Avoidance									
Empathic Effort						18.32	5	.00	.639
Biological Sex	.07	.03	.24	.32	.74				
Relationship Satisfaction	-.04	-.32	.02	-2.14	.03				
Attachment Avoidance	.21	.29	.10	2.08	.04				
Attachment Anxiety	.10	.27	.04	2.54	.01				
Empathic Effort	-.06	-.11	.06	-1.04	.30				
Responsibility-Taking						18.45	5	.00	.640
Biological Sex	.05	.02	.24	.24	.80				
Relationship Satisfaction	-.04	-.30	.02	-2.07	.04				
Attachment Avoidance	.19	.27	.10	1.92	.06				
Attachment Anxiety	.10	.26	.04	2.53	.01				
Responsibility-Taking	-.08	-.13	.07	-1.14	.25				
Comforting Responsiveness						18.12	5	.00	.636
Biological Sex	.07	.02	.24	.30	.76				
Relationship Satisfaction	-.04	-.31	.02	-2.12	.04				
Attachment Anxiety	.21	.29	.10	2.09	.04				
Attachment Avoidance	.10	.26	.04	2.44	.02				
Comforting Responsiveness	-.05	-.09	.06	-.87	.39				

	B	*β*	*Coeff. SE*	*t*	*p*	*F*	*df*	*p*	*Adj. R^2*
Forgiveness: Revenge-Seeking									
Empathic Effort						5.14	5	.00	.297
Biological Sex	.28	.11	.29	.96	.34				
Relationship Satisfaction	.02	.18	.02	.90	.37				
Attachment Avoidance	.28	.45	.12	2.27	.02				
Attachment Anxiety	.17	.49	.05	3.34	.00				
Empathic Effort	.13	.27	.07	1.85	.07				
Responsibility-Taking						4.80	5	.00	.280
Biological Sex	.32	.13	.30	1.06	.29				
Relationship Satisfaction	.02	.17	.02	.83	.41				
Attachment Avoidance	.28	.44	.12	2.18	.03				
Attachment Anxiety	.17	.50	.05	3.32	.00				
Responsibility-Taking	.14	.24	.09	1.5	.13				
Comforting Responsiveness						4.90	5	.00	.285
Biological Sex	.29	.12	.30	.98	.32				
Relationship Satisfaction	.02	.18	.02	.87	.39				
Attachment Avoidance	.27	.43	.12	2.19	.03				
Attachment Anxiety	.17	.51	.05	3.44	.00				
Comforting Responsiveness	.13	.25	.08	1.61	.11				

	B	*β*	*Coef f. SE*	*t*	*p*	*F*	*df*	*p*	*Adj. R^2*
Forgiveness: Benevolence									
Empathic Effort						12.13	5	.00	.532
Biological Sex	.10	.03	.26	.38	.70				
Relationship Satisfaction	.06	.47	.02	2.82	.00				
Attachment Avoidance	-.03	-.04	.11	-.27	.78				
Attachment Anxiety	-.04	-.11	.04	-.91	.36				
Empathic Effort	.15	.28	.06	2.39	.02				
Responsibility-Taking						12.96	5	.00	.550
Biological Sex	.15	.05	.25	.59	.55				
Relationship Satisfaction	.06	.44	.02	2.68	.01				
Attachment Avoidance	.00	.00	.10	.02	.98				
Attachment Anxiety	-.03	-.10	.04	-.87	.38				
Responsibility-Taking	.22	.36	.07	2.77	.00				
Comforting Responsiveness						12.36	5	.00	.537
Biological Sex	.11	.04	.25	.43	.66				
Relationship Satisfaction	.06	.46	.02	2.75	.01				
Attachment Avoidance	-.02	-.03	.11	-.18	.85				
Attachment Anxiety	-.03	-.08	.04	-.67	.50				
Comforting Responsiveness	.17	.32	.07	2.50	.01				

Note. $N = 50$. ***p < .001. **p < .01. *p < .05. All values are two tailed.